



St. Augustine on the Incarnation:

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled, of the word of life." Who is he that with hands doth handle the Word, except because "The Word was made flesh and dwelt in us"? Now this Word which was made flesh that it might be handled, began to be flesh, of the Virgin Mary: but not then began the Word, for the Apostle saith, "That which was from the beginning." See whether his epistle does not bear witness to his gospel, where ye lately heard, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God." Perchance, "Concerning the word of life" one may take as a sort of expressing concerning Christ, not the very body of Christ which was handled with hands. See what follows, "And the Life was manifested." Christ therefore is "the word of life." And whereby manifested? For it was "from the beginning,"...

(Homily on 1 John 1:1-2:11)

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Around the Word
BIBLE STUDY

Trinity, 2016

1 John 1:1-10

Introduction: John the Evangelist's pastoral heart comes through in his Epistles, and his comforting and gentle way of teaching the faith is helpful for us to hear even today. As we dig into John's first letter, we will see the importance of the incarnation as a historical reality of God's work in our midst and the importance of what it means to "walk in the light." While James' approach to the Christian life is driven by urging us by the Law, John makes it clear that our good works are an outpouring of our thankfulness for the grace that we have received in Christ.

Opening: Psalm 98

¹Oh sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done | marvelous things!*
His right hand and his holy arm
have worked salva- | tion for him.

²**The LORD has made known his sal- | vation;*
he has revealed his righteousness in the
sight of the | nations.**

³He has remembered his steadfast love and
Faithfulness to the house of | Israel.*
All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation | of our God.

⁴**Make a joyful noise to the LORD, | all the
earth;*
break forth into joyous song and sing |
praises!**

⁵Sing praises to the LORD | with the lyre,*
with the lyre and the sound of | melody!

⁶**With trumpets and the sound | of the horn*
make a joyful noise before the | King, the
LORD!**

⁷Let the sea roar, and all that | fills it;*
the world and those who | dwell in it!

⁸**Let the rivers clap their hands;
let the hills sing for joy together**

⁹**be- | fore the LORD,*
for he comes to | judge the earth.**

He will judge the world with | righteousness,*
and the peoples with | equity.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

¹ **That which was from the beginning, which
we have heard, which we have seen with our
eyes, which we looked upon and have
touched with our hands, concerning the word
of life—**

John begins this letter by echoing the beginning

of his Gospel. Read John 1:1-14.

Who is John talking about in this verse that was from the beginning, whom they heard, saw, and touched?

John appeals to the eyewitness testimony of the Apostles here. Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. What makes the eyewitness testimony of the Apostles important?

² **the life was made manifest, and we have
seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you
the eternal life, which was with the Father
and was made manifest to us—**

What does Jesus say about himself in John 11:25?

How was the life made manifest? Read Luke 2:26-33.

Why is it so important to John to affirm that Jesus Christ actually came in the flesh? Read 1 Corinthians 15:17-19.

Is it important for us today to defend and affirm the incarnation of our Lord?

³ **that which we have seen and heard we pro-
claim also to you, so that you too may have
fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship
is with the Father and with his Son Jesus
Christ.**

How does compare with what John says in his Gospel (John 20:31)?

What is the source of our fellowship as Christians? Read John 17:20-21

Having fellowship with the Apostles and the

Church universal means that we have a share in the inheritance of Christ; namely salvation, forgiveness, and eternal life.

⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

Read John 15:7-11. Joy comes from abiding in Christ.

We will see that John is writing this in response to those who were already saying that Jesus had not come in the flesh. The Apostle's joy is complete when God's people remain in the true faith and hold fast to what God has revealed.

Do you think that your pastor has joy when his people are holding to the true faith?

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

From whom did John and the Apostles hear this message?

Does this verse reflect anything more from the beginning of John's Gospel that you read earlier?

What does darkness symbolize in this verse? What does light symbolize?

Is this kind of symbolism something that exists outside of Scripture?

Read James 1:17. Does he draw on similar symbolism?

In the Dead Sea Scrolls that aren't copies of the Old Testament, the language of light vs. dark is present there as well, debunking claims that this kind of thinking didn't exist in John's day.

⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

Read Galatians 5:16-17. What does it mean to walk by the Spirit?

Walking is active. Do you think that John sees a connection between how we act and what we believe?

The New Testament idea of walking conveys a way of life. Does this mean then that a "real" Christian never sins?

⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

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The light reveals and doesn't cover up. Should we pretend to be sinless people?

Read Ephesians 1:7. Is a righteous life a requirement for our sins to be forgiven?

Read 1 Peter 1:17-20. The true bodily presence of Jesus is necessary for his blood to cleanse us from all sins.

Read Revelation 5:9-10. Why is the lamb (Christ) worthy to open the scroll?

⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

These are words that are part of our liturgy. When do we say them?

Why do you think someone would want to say that they are without sin?

Read John 15:5. Can someone apart from faith in Christ be forgiven?

Even when we do good, how should we view it? Read Luke 17:10

This is a wonderful Gospel promise that God will forgive our sins. When you hear the words of Absolution, are your sins truly forgiven?

¹⁰ If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Read Genesis 5:6, John 5:37-38, and Romans 3:10-18. What has God said about the state of mankind regarding our sin?

When we act and believe contrary to God's Word, we have rejected him.

Closing Hymn: The Only Son from Heaven (LSB, 402)

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